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QUERIES

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To be Answer'd by the

MANAGER

Fleetwood (C.)

OF

Drury-Lane THEATRE,

For the Satisfaction of the PUBLICK, in regard to the Present DISPUTE between *Him* and *His Actors*.

LONDON:

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[Price Six Pence.]

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[illegible]

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To be Anſwer'd by the

MANAGER

OF

Drury-Lane THEATRE.

AS the Conteſt, between the Manager of *Drury-Lane* Theatre, and his Actors, has ingroſs'd great part of the Converſation about Town, and as both Parties have their Advocates affirming each to be in the right; we believe a few Lines

upon this Subject will not be improper or diſagreeable to thoſe who have Inclination, or Leiſure, to concern themſelves in the Diſpute.

The Reaſons aſſign'd by the Manager for their Diſagreement are theſe, *viz.* The unreaſonable Demands of the Actors, and the extraordinary Expences of the Theatre; the Truth of which I ſhall endeavour to find out by asking a few *Queries:* If they can be ſatisfactorily anſwer'd by the Manager, I promiſe immediately to relinquiſh the Party I now write for, and draw my Pen againſt them, as willingly as I took it up in their Defence.

Query. Were not the Patents for Theatrical Performances originally, and almoſt always, granted to Players, as a Reward for their extraordinary Merit; or to Authors, whoſe Profeſſion has a near Affinity to the Stage?

Query. Whether the firſt Deſign of the Patent, now at *Drury-Lane*, was not, that the Right ſhou'd expire with the Life of the Patentee, and ſo deſcend to the next in Merit, till the Addreſs of ſome People had it alter'd to the Words *Heirs and Aſſigns*; by which the truly noble Intention of the Crown was perverted, and the preſent Manager became Maſter of it?

Query. Were not the Incomes of *Booth*, *Wilks*, and *Cibber*, who obtain'd the Patent for the Conſiderations aſſign'd in the firſt *Query*, one Year with another, ſeveral hundred Pounds more than the beſt Performers had laſt Seaſon; and yet were yearly adding to their Stock, by Clothes, Scenes, *&c.*?

Query. And is it reaſonable that the beſt Performers, now, ſhou'd be ſatisfy'd with the ſame Salaries given to the ſecond Claſs of Actors, then under the Patentees?

Query. Did not the Merit of Mr. *Booth*, as an Actor, procure him Intereſt enough to force himſelf into the Licence, againſt the labour'd Oppoſition of *Dogget*, *Wilks*, and *Cibber*?

Query. Did not Sir *Richard Steele*, when he obtain'd his Patent, think it prudent, as well as juſt, immediately to part with three Fourths of the Profits of the then moſt conſiderable Theatre to three Actors, well knowing, that by them only, he could make the other Fourth of any Advantage to himſelf?

Query. Have not the Receipts of the Theatre, ſince in the Poſſeſſion of the preſent Manager, been much larger than in the Time of *Wilks*, *Booth*, and *Cibber*?

Query. If the Manager can pay his Actors, and the other Expences as they ſtood laſt Year, and his Profits ariſe to near three thouſand Pounds, ought not the Actors at leaſt

leaſt to be continued in their Salaries, rather than lower'd?

Query. Has he not often declar'd, when he was about to ſell the Patent, and at other times, particularly towards the End of laſt Seaſon, that his Profits, one Year with another, amounted to more than the above Sum?

Query. If the Charges of the Theatre, by the Miſmanagement of the Patentee, are greatly augmented, ſhould the Actors, who are of viſible Service, and without whom he cannot proceed, ſuffer for his Folly and bad Judgment?

Query. Did not his *Italian* and *French* People laſt Seaſon, excluſive of his Band of Muſick, ſtand him in upwards of Seventy Pounds *per* Week? And what did they contribute to the Profits of the Seaſon?

Query.

Query. Did he not pay Mr. *Philips*, the Harlequin, Five Pounds *per* Week, laſt Seaſon, for Dancing half a Score Hornpipes in the *Beggar's Opera*?

Query. Did he not engage a ſpeaking *French* Harlequin at four Pounds *per* Week, who never once appear'd upon the Stage, and who, if he had appear'd, he was pretty certain wou'd have had his Bones broke?

Query. Has not the preſent Manager made the Profeſſion of an Actor, contrary to what it was in *Wilks*, *Booth*, and *Cibber's* time, the moſt precarious Employment in Being, by turning out, and taking in Perſons, as Whim and Caprice might lead? and, (admitting the conſtant Certainty of the Employ,) is ſpending the Prime of Life for little more than a bare Subſiſtance reaſonable? Shou'd not Families in this Profeſſion, as well as others, be provided for? or will the Manager's Humanity transfer that Care to the Pariſh?

Query:

Query. Have not ſome Families of deceas'd Performers, and thoſe of great Merit, met with ſevere Uſage from the Patentee, tho' they were diſtreſs'd, and had Demands upon him?

Query. May not an Actor, by many various Accidents, be diſabled from following his Profeſſion? and, if he has not laid up ſomething by his former Oeconomy, will not the Generoſity and Gratitude of the Patentee for paſt Services be a moſt precarious Dependence?

Query. Does he not make a Merit of a handſome Preſent to a particular Perſon laſt Seaſon for the great Service he had done him? and if he was ſo great a Loſer as he pretends, is it to be imagin'd he would have made him ſuch a Preſent? and if a great Gainer, was it not unreaſonable to attempt reducing his Income this Seaſon?

Query.

Query. Was there not between fifteen and ſixteen Thouſand Pounds taken laſt Year at his Theatre?

Query. Did not Mr. *Cibber ſenior* receive fifty, ſixty, and from the Manager now in Queſtion, ninety Pounds *per* Night for Acting? and after this ſhall the late Agreements of the Actors be thought an Hardſhip?

Query. Cou'd not the beſt of SHAKESPEAR's Plays be Acted now by the beſt Performers, as their Salaries ſtood laſt Year, with all the other neceſſary Expences, as Muſick, Clothes, Houſe-Rent, Candles, *&c.* at leſs than fifty Pounds *per* Night?

Query. Will it not be proper to Print the Charges of the Theatre, with every Agreement laſt Seaſon, that the Town may judge of his Management, and decide in favour of him or the Actors?

Query.

Query. Will it not be neceſſary, in the Anſwer to theſe Queries, to join Proofs to Aſſertions, leſt Perſons, who are unacquainted with the Gentleman, ſhou'd have Ill-manners enough to doubt his Veracity?

Query. Was there not an Offer made him of fifteen Hundred Pounds for the Profits of the enſuing Seaſon, allowing the Salaries to the Players as they ſtood laſt Year? or elſe one Thouſand Pounds to be ſecur'd him; and after all the Expences of the Play-houſe were paid, half the remaining Profit? and wou'd he, if a Loſer laſt Seaſon, refuſe ſuch conſiderable Gain for this?

Query. And wou'd it not have been better for the Stage, that he had accepted of this Offer, that Plays might have been repreſented with the neceſſary Decorations and Attendance, the want of which was almoſt every Night complain'd of, and which was owing to the Scene-men, Supernumeraries and

others refuſing to attend the Buſineſs of the Theatre, becauſe unpaid.

Query. Has he not induſtriouſly inſinuated, that the Ingratitude of a particular Perſon is the occaſion of the Diviſion between him and the Players, in order to hurt their Cauſe with the Publick, and ought his private Complaints, againſt one Man, to interfere with the general Complaint of the whole Body againſt him?

Query. Is there no Agreement, or Cartel, relative to the Actors, now ſubſiſting between him and the other Patentee; and if there be, muſt it not abſolutely bring the Players to his own Terms, if not redreſs'd, and likewiſe hinder the beſt from acting together, to the great Prejudice of Theatrical Diverſions?

Query. Does it not ſeem very reaſonable that they ſhould make a Stand againſt him at this Time; for if they comply with his Terms, the ſame Motive that induc'd him to

lower

lower them now will always ſubſiſt? And wou'd it not be too Complaiſant in them to ſubmit their Labour to the Deciſion of his Conſcience and Judgment?

Query. Wou'd it not have appear'd better to the World had he paid the many large Arrears due to his Actors, *&c.* before he excluded them from his Play-houſe for not ſubmitting to his Terms?

Query. Does it not ſeem highly probable, that he intended to ſtarve the greater Part of them into a Compliance, as he is ſure that they cannot recover what he owes them, and knows that they have not wherewithal to ſubſiſt without the Play-houſe?

Query. Has he not formerly drawn off Performers from the other Patentee, tho' they were in Articles, and agreed to indemnify them?

Query. If he put himſelf to this extraordinary Expence for Actors, did he not conclude

it would anſwer in Profit, or did he do it merely to diſtreſs his Brother Manager, without any other Conſideration?

Query. If notwithſtanding ſuch large Profits flowing from the Theatre, as he has himſelf confeſs'd, there are yet great Sums of Money owing to Performers of all Kinds, Tradeſmen and others, as can be prov'd; is it not natural to ſuppoſe that either this Patentee's Circumſtances, or Deſires, cannot be limited to a reaſonable Profit, but that he is reſolv'd to graſp at more at the Expence of the Actors?

Query. Ought not the Manager, if he really had been hard us'd and ill-treated by the Actors, publickly to have acquainted the Town with it; which, if true, would have ſilenc'd the Actors and left them Defenceleſs; inſtead of inſinuating Falſities by private Whiſpers and Coffee-houſe Harangues, endeavouring to magnify the poor Gentleman's Diſtreſſes, and ſetting forth the Inſolence and Unreaſonableneſs of his Actors?

Query.

Query. Have not the Hardſhips of all who have belong'd to him, particularly the lower Sort of People been innumerable? Have not the Dreſſers and others at One Shilling or Eighteen Pence *per* Night been unpaid fifteen or ſixteen Weeks together? Have not Collections been made among the Actors to prevent ſome from ſtarving, and to bury others? Has not his Treaſurer inſolently refus'd to pay 'em their Due, and laugh'd at their Diſtreſſes? Have not the Doors of the Theatre been kept ſhut at Benefit-Nights 'till near five o'Clock, in order to get Money for Coals, Candles, *&c.* from the Perſons concern'd, tho' large Arrears were due to 'em? Was not Word ſent to Mr. *Berry* at a time when no body expected his Life, that the Doors ſhou'd not be open'd, unleſs the whole Charge of the Benefit was paid, a thing moſt unprecedented? Are not Mr. *Mills* and Mrs. *Butler* in a moſt melancholy Situation upon his Account? Was not the one arreſted for Five Hundred Pounds, and the other forc'd to keep her Chamber for four Months, for

fear

fear of being arreſted too? And are they not liable to a Debt of above a Thouſand Pounds which he had covenanted to pay long before this? Has not he drove ſome of the poorer People to beg their Bread for want of the ſmalleſt part of their juſt Debts, and does he think upon publiſhing the many calamitous Caſes of particular Perſons, that the Publick will be ſurpris'd at the preſent Struggle of the Actors againſt ſuch a Manager?

Many more Queſtions might be ask'd, but, if I am rightly inform'd, theſe will be found more than he can give a ſatisfactory Anſwer to: I ſhall now take leave of my Readers, with what I hope will not be thought foreign to the Subject, *viz.* What I imagine to be the Qualifications neceſſary to make a Manager of a Play-houſe.

A Manager, in my Opinion, ought to have *Good-ſenſe* to regulate a Body of People; *Good-nature* to appeaſe Animoſities within Doors; and *Prudence* to prevent Tumults with-

without; *Judgment* in the Choice of his Plays; *Decency* in the Conduct of them; *Taſte* in his Decorations; *Impartiality* in Diſpoſing of his Characters; *Good-manners* in his Treatment of Authors; *Generoſity* to reward Merit; and above all *Honeſty* to perform his Contracts.

This I look upon as the Picture of a complete Manager; how near a Copy the preſent Patentee is I am yet a Stranger to, but am endeavouring to get Information; which, when done, the Publick, as ſoon as poſſible, ſhall be acquainted with.

FINIS.

FINIS.